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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they were provided with food, given *currach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are

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624 875 [793] [554] more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 [829] Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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> conditions appraised. . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940 190–191)

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually instituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[657] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Tax-
[746] ation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect